THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI BOLLA BULI RAMAIAH): (a) Government does not procure tobacco directly. However, the Minimum Support price (MSP) for various grades of tobacco are announced each year by the Taboacco board on the recommendation of Commission for Agricultural Costs and Prices.

(b) No, Sir.

(c) Some of the steps taken to enhance exports of toobacco and tobacco products include, inter-alia, reorientation of the domestic production of tobacco to meet changing international needs, enhancement of quality and productivity levels, monitoring and strict control of pesticide residues, aligning grading to international standards, and permitting imports for product development.

An Expert Committee has been set up by the Ministry of Health to examine the tax revenue and foreign exchange earnings, employment and consumer expenditure on the one hand and the cost of teirtary level medical care facilities for treatment of tobacco related diseases, losses due to fire hazard, ecological damage due to deforestation and disposal of tobacco related waste on the other hand with a view to making an economic study of the impact of tobacco consumption.

Export Incentives

3233. SHRI YERRA NARAYANASWAMY: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the news item appearing in the Business Standard dated 18th February, 1997, captioned "Export incentives likely to be enhanced".

(b) whether there is a proposal to simplify and rationalise all export incentives;

(c) if so, the details thereof;

(d) whether the new policy will benefit exporters; and

(e) if so, by when this policy will come into force?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI BOLLA BULI RAMAIAH): (a) to (d) Yes, Sir. The Government has already simplified and rationalised all the export promotional schemes given in Exim Policy. The details of these schemes are available in the Export-import Policy (1997—2002). The schemes of Export Promotion Capital Goods, Duty Exemption, Diamond, Gem and Jewellery Export Promotion Scheme and scheme of Export Oriented Units, Units in Export Processing Zones, Electronic Hardware Technology Park and Software Technology Park have been reationalised and simplified considerably. The Government has tried to deregulate and simplify procedures and to create a congenial environment for exporting community, so that the benefit of the policy can be availed by the exporters.

(e) The policy has come into force from 1.4.1997.

Monitoring System to Estimate Exports and Imports of Foodgrains

3234. SHRI V. HANUMANTHA RAO: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any monitoring system to estimate exports or imports of Foodgrains in any given year;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether this system can be improved;

(d) whether sufficient attention is not being paid to the strategy in export or import of foodgrains; and

(e) if so, the reasons thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI BOLLA BULI RAMAIAH): (a) Yes Sir.